



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
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July 30, 2008

Dear Colleagues,

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH), in collaboration with the Local Public Health Institute of Massachusetts, is pleased to announce the continuation of the statewide educational campaign *Flu: What You Can Do – Caring for People at Home*. This initiative launched in November 2007 with the goal of providing information and tools to enable residents in Massachusetts to care for themselves and their loved ones at home, during the regular flu season or a pandemic. MDPH prioritizes educating residents in order to build the preparedness and community resiliency that will be very important during a pandemic.

MDPH would like to thank everyone who has been a partner in the campaign to date; your involvement has been instrumental in the success of the campaign. Due to your participation, the campaign has exceeded its goals. Accomplishments over the past year include the:

- distribution of 330,000 English, Spanish and Portuguese booklets;
- distribution of the video to all local boards of health and approximately 82 cable access stations; and
- implementation of 23 “Educating Communities on Flu Care at Home” training sessions across the state resulting in the preparation of 275 participants to become part of the education team.

Evaluation is currently being conducted to measure change in knowledge, perceptions and attitudes, and intent to change behavior that will inform the campaign as we move forward.

As we move into the next flu season, our goal is to expand the campaign to reach even more Massachusetts residents, including greater numbers of people who do not read English, and those who may need special assistance during an emergency. We will be translating the booklet into Chinese, Vietnamese and Haitian Creole, developing lower literacy level educational item(s), increasing partnerships with community members that represent diverse populations, and providing more training sessions to increase the amount of community educational teams. We anticipate translation of the booklet into the new languages will be completed by September 15th.

The training sessions will be hosted this fall. If you haven't already, we hope that you can attend one of these sessions. Visit the Local Public Health Institute's website at www.masslocalinstitute.org for a calendar of sessions and to register. On the Institute website, you can also learn about the strategies that local public health professionals and others across the state used to educate their communities during the last flu season.

The MDPH website at: <http://www.mass.gov/dph/> contains campaign materials, information on how to order materials and resources that can be utilized to reach members of your community. We hope that you will take advantage of these materials. Thank you again for your assistance in educating Massachusetts residents about the flu and flu care at home. Questions about the campaign can be addressed to Barbara Coughlin, RN, Health Educator at barbara.coughlin@state.ma.us or (413) 586-7525 x1165.

Sincerely,

John Auerbach
Commissioner